United Nations A/73/315

General Assembly

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Seventy-third session
Item 93 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General**

1. The sixty-second report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, for the calendar year 2017 (GC(62)/3), is submitted herewith to the General Assembly. Major developments since the report was published will be covered by the annual statement of the Director General of the Agency to the Assembly. The report has been transmitted in accordance with the provisions of article III, paragraph 1 (a), of the Agreement governing the relationship between the United Nations and the Agency (Assembly resolution 1145 (XII), annex).

2. As only a limited number of copies of the report are available, delegations are requested to have the copies transmitted to them available during the discussion of this item.

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* A/73/150.

** The annual reports, in all languages, are printed in Vienna in August of each year as part of the documentation for the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. A specified number of copies are sent to the United Nations as part of the documentation for the General Assembly.

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United Nations A/73/316

General Assembly

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Seventy-third session
Item 117 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 6 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations, in reference to the candidature of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Human Rights Council for the term 2019–2021 and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, has the honour to transmit herewith the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria for the promotion and protection of all human rights (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria would be grateful if the present note and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 117 (d) of the provisional agenda.

* A/73/150.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 6 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Bulgaria to the Human Rights Council, 2019–2021

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The Republic of Bulgaria presents its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2019–2021, the elections for which will be held in New York during the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, in 2018.

2. Bulgaria strongly upholds the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which articulates a commitment to universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind. Bulgaria is fully committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and has adopted a wide range of legislative, institutional, policy and administrative measures to fulfil its national, regional and international obligations relating to human rights.

3. The Republic of Bulgaria is presenting its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the first time. Bulgaria pledges to strengthen the membership of the Council and adhere to its membership standards.

4. Bulgaria aims to apply objective, human rights-based criteria in addressing situations of concern and remains fully committed to further strengthening its fruitful cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and all international human rights mechanisms.

5. Building on our traditional active engagement with United Nations human rights bodies and the rich experience of successfully chairing the former Commission on Human Rights and the Third Committee of the General Assembly, we endeavour to continue to promote a strong human rights-based approach in the work of the United Nations.

6. Bulgaria strongly maintains the standpoint that all human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible and interdependent, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7. The Republic of Bulgaria has ratified seven core international human rights instruments and is continuously engaged in timely reporting on their implementation. Bulgaria is also party to the major human rights treaties at the regional level and fully recognizes the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.

8. In line with its long-standing commitment to promoting and protecting human rights for all and its consistent engagement and balanced position in international human rights forums, the Republic of Bulgaria makes the pledges set out below with regard to its candidature to the Human Rights Council.

Commitments at the international level

9. Bulgaria will further support the work and independence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations human rights mechanisms, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the human rights mandate holders.

10. We endeavour to support initiatives aimed at strengthening the efficiency of the Human Rights Council, improving its methods of work and ensuring its effectiveness

and transparency. Bulgaria is committed to promoting universal participation in the Human Rights Council. Ensuring that the work of the Council has a direct impact on the ground should be a prerogative for all of us.

11. Looking forward to the review of the United Nations human rights treaty body system by the General Assembly in 2020, Bulgaria will engage in and support all efforts aimed at further strengthening the independence, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness of the treaty bodies and special procedures.

12. Bulgaria will work to further strengthen the role of the universal periodic review as an excellent and unique tool for peer review and the sharing of good practices in the field of human rights, while also considering the challenges remaining after the first two full cycles of the review.

13. Bulgaria will support common efforts to bring grave country-specific situations to the attention of the United Nations and will ensure that they are addressed in proper ways, demanding accountability and ending impunity.

14. Our actions for promoting and protecting human rights will also be framed within an integrated approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from a human rights perspective.

15. The Republic of Bulgaria will encourage open discussions on all human rights-related topics with the participation of civil society and human rights defenders. Building on its experience as Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council for the period 2011–2014, Bulgaria will continue to support the participation of civil society at the United Nations.

16. The protection and promotion of and respect for the rights of the child is a key priority on Bulgaria's human rights agenda and will feature as an important aspect of its membership of the Human Rights Council. Bulgaria contributed to the advancement of children's rights as Vice-President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2014 and as a founding member and Co-Chair of the Group of Friends for Children and Sustainable Development Goals.

17. Bulgaria will continue to support and actively participate in the elaboration of Human Rights Council and General Assembly resolutions on the rights of the child and will work to maintain the consensual nature of those resolutions. We will aim to put a special focus on inclusive education and early childhood development, as equal access to education and health services is crucial to ensuring the realization of all rights of the child. Considering the expertise we have acquired through our fruitful cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, OHCHR, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations, we will also pay particular attention to the rights of migrant children.

18. Building on Bulgaria's long-standing traditions in the field of equality between women and men, we intend to advance the efforts of the international community to achieve full gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the full realization of their human rights. Bulgaria will focus on actively sharing good practices relating to the equal participation of women in political, economic and public life and in decision-making processes at all levels.

19. As President of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2017–2018, Bulgaria has contributed to strengthening the implementation of the Convention through a more inclusive and participatory approach involving persons with disabilities and the organizations that represent them. Progressing from that successful experience, we will maintain and develop our active and constructive engagement with all initiatives to promote and

protect the rights of persons with disabilities for their full participation in all aspects of life on an equal basis with others.

20. In a world of increasing threats to security, maintaining a tolerant society is a serious challenge. In line with Bulgaria's long-standing tradition of tolerance and acceptance, we will continue to work actively for the elimination all forms of discrimination and violence, promoting the principles of equality and non-discrimination in all decisions and actions of the Human Rights Council.

21. The Republic of Bulgaria puts special emphasis on the promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding, pluralism, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, human rights education and respect for cultural diversity to promote the formation of positive attitudes towards persons belonging to different ethnic or religious communities.

22. Considering the challenges of the modern age, trafficking in human beings and smuggling should be regarded as grave violations of human rights with huge human, social and economic implications that require a concerted global response. Bulgaria will advocate addressing the root causes of trafficking, including poverty, unemployment, lack of educational opportunities, social exclusion and marginalization.

Commitments at the national level

23. The Republic of Bulgaria will continue to report regularly to the United Nations treaty bodies on the implementation of all human rights instruments ratified by the country. We will also maintain an active dialogue and cooperation with human rights mechanisms on individual complaints.

24. Bulgaria will also endeavour to enhance the national implementation of all human rights instruments and of the recommendations of the treaty bodies and will consider widening the scope of its international obligations.

25. Contemplating the third cycle of the universal periodic review, the Republic of Bulgaria intends to submit a midterm review by the end of 2018.

26. Having issued a standing invitation in March 2001 to all special procedures mandate holders, Bulgaria will uphold that invitation and will continue to offer them full cooperation.

27. The Republic of Bulgaria will continue to foster multilateral cooperation in the field of human rights, further strengthening the country's collaboration with OHCHR and the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations system, as well as regional human rights bodies.

28. We will focus on the following priority areas:

(a) Advancing the broad interministerial and public dialogue with all stakeholders for the promotion and protection of the human rights of all persons residing in Bulgaria;

(b) Promoting social, economic and cultural rights, with special attention to the protection of children and their rights and the advancement of gender equality and the rights of persons with disabilities and of other vulnerable groups;

(c) Strengthening ethnic and religious tolerance, the freedom of speech and expression and the freedom of religion or belief;

(d) Protecting the rights of migrants and refugees;

(e) Taking targeted actions to enhance the rule of law, democracy and good governance.

29. The Republic of Bulgaria will continue to effectively involve civil society representatives, social partners and other stakeholders in all human rights-related policymaking and decision-making processes at all levels.

30. Bulgaria will continue to support the human rights-based approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

31. On the basis of respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, Bulgaria will strive to spread awareness for the need to increase the effectiveness of national legislation, policies and programmes in the field of human rights and to strengthen the capacity of national human rights institutions to promote and protect human rights.

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Seventy-third session
Item 137 of the provisional agenda*
Programme budget for the biennium 2018–2019

Sixteenth annual progress report on the implementation of the capital master plan

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The sixteenth annual progress report on the implementation of the capital master plan is submitted pursuant to section II, paragraph 34, of General Assembly resolution 57/292. The report provides an update on the status of the project since the issuance of the fifteenth annual progress report (A/72/294 and A/72/294/Corr.1).

The renovation of the Headquarters complex was substantially completed by September 2014 for the opening of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, and all the buildings within the scope of the project were occupied and functional from that time.

From July 2015 until the time of preparation of the present report, the Office of Central Support Services continued with the implementation of post-renovation, commissioning and punch-list corrective activities and administrative tasks in support of the close-out of the project.

As at August 2017, all construction work for all scopes of the capital master plan project and its subcomponents, including the interim solutions and post-renovation activities, had been completed and achieved the status of final completion. In March 2018, all contracts were administratively closed out, including the reconciliation of accounts and payment of invoices, with the exception of some invoices subject to arbitration.

The cost of all construction and close-out activities has been met as planned from within the existing approved resources of the capital master plan project. The financial position of the project remains consistent with the projection presented in the fifteenth annual progress report.

The General Assembly is requested to take note of the present report and to request the Secretary-General to submit a seventeenth progress report at the main part of its seventy-fourth session.

* A/73/150.

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I. Project status

1. The capital master plan was the largest and most comprehensive construction and renovation project undertaken by the United Nations. The project met its objectives of honouring and preserving the original historic design of the Headquarters complex, while at the same time modernizing the facilities to meet current accessibility, safety, security and technological standards.

2. Planning for the capital master plan began in 1999, the Office of the Capital Master Plan was created in 2002 and the construction phase of the project spanned the period from 2008 to 2014.

3. In July 2015, the Office of the Capital Master Plan was closed and the responsibility for all remaining activities was assumed by the Office of Central Support Services.

4. The General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit annual reports on the progress, schedule, projected cost to completion and financial status of the capital master plan. The present report is the sixteenth such report to the Assembly.

5. Since the issuance of the fifteenth annual progress report (A/72/294 and A/72/294/Corr.1), progress has been made with respect to the administrative close-out activities, as outlined below.

6. The accounts associated with all 24 guaranteed maximum price contracts with the construction management company were reconciled and paid.

7. As at 31 July 2018, the final projected cost of the capital master plan remained at $2,150.4 million, in line with the approved resources (excluding the renovation of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/274). More details in this respect are provided in section V of the present report. At the time of reporting, over 99.9 per cent of the funds had been expended.

8. The capital master plan project has maintained the overall schedule reported in table 1 of the fifteenth annual progress report. The final status of the schedule is presented in table 1 of the present report.

Table 1
Projected schedule of the capital master plan

	As set out in A/63/477		*As set out in A/64/346*		*As set out in A/65/511*		*As set out in A/66/527*		*As set out in A/67/350*		*As set out in A/68/352*		*As set out in A/69/360*		*As set out in A/70/343*		*As set out in A/71/409*		*As set out in A/72/294*		*As set out in the present report*		
Activity	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Start*	*Complete*	*Status*
Construction of North Lawn Building	Early 2008	Mid-2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Mid-2008	Late 2009	Completed
Secretariat Building	Early 2009	Early 2012	Late 2009	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Early 2010	Mid-2012	Completed
Conference Building	Mid-2009	Mid-2011	Late 2009	Late 2011	Early 2010	Early 2012	Early 2010	Late 2012	Early 2010	Late 2012	Early 2010	Early 2013	Early 2010	Early 2013	Early 2010	Early 2013	Early 2010	Early 2013	Early 2010	Early 2013	Early 2010	Early 2013	Completed
General Assembly Building	Mid-2011	Mid-2013	Late 2011	Late 2013	Early 2012	Late 2013	Early 2013	Mid-2014	Early 2013	Mid-2014	Mid-2013	Mid-2014	Mid-2013	Mid-2014	Mid-2013	Mid-2014	Mid-2013	Mid-2014	Mid-2013	Mid-2014	Mid-2013	Mid-2014	Completed
South Annex Building	Early 2011	Early 2012	Late 2011	Early 2013	Early 2012	Mid-2013	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	Suspended
Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building	Early 2012	Early 2013	Early 2013	Late 2013	Early 2012	Late 2013	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	Suspended
Completion of renovation of United Nations Headquarters	Early 2008	Mid-2013	Late 2008	Late 2013	Mid-2008	Late 2013	Mid-2008	Mid-2014	Mid-2008	Mid-2014	Mid-2008	Late 2014	Late 2008	Late 2014	Late 2008	Late 2014	Late 2008	Late 2014	Late 2008	Late 2014	Late 2008	Late 2014	Completed
Closure of the Office of the Capital Master Plan and handover to the Office of Central Support Services													–	Mid-2015		Mid-2015		July 2015		July 2015		July 2015	Completed
Demolition of temporary North Lawn Conference Building													Early 2015	Late 2015	Late 2015	Late 2016	Late 2015	Mid-2016	Mid-2016	Mid-2016	Mid-2016	Mid-2016	Completed
Landscaping of North Lawn													Early 2015	Late 2015	Late 2015	Late 2016	Late 2015	Late 2016	Late 2016	Mid-2017	Late 2016	Mid-2017	Completed
Security-related work at 42nd and 48th Streets													Early 2015	Late 2016	Late 2015	Late 2016	Late 2015	Late 2016	Late 2016	Mid-2017	Late 2016	Mid-2017	Completed

II. Remaining activities

9. At the time of the submission of the present report, all construction work had been completed for all scopes and subcomponents of the capital master plan project and all invoices had been paid, with the exception of liabilities related to the two ongoing arbitration cases detailed in section VI of the present report.

III. Implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors

10. The Board of Auditors continued its audit work following the issuance of the previous annual progress report. The Board conducted the audit of the capital master plan project for the financial year ended 31 December 2017 from 19 March to 13 April 2018.

11. At the time of the audit, the capital master plan was in its final phase after 16 years and an investment of $2,309.3 million. All construction works had been completed and all contracts had been administratively closed out, with the exception of payments relating to two arbitration cases.

12. The Board's main recommendations from the audit for the financial year ended 31 December 2017 were focused on four primary areas:

(a) Reviewing the methodology followed for the preparation of estimates for construction projects;

(b) Developing a business intelligence report for maintenance actions in the Umoja plant maintenance module;

(c) Maintaining an updated gift registry and carrying out an annual physical verification thereof;

(d) Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the maintenance costs for the recreational facilities donated by the International Olympic Committee and ensuring adequate arrangements for funding.

13. The Secretariat accepted all the recommendations of the Board and has committed itself to their full implementation. During its audit, the Board also closed four recommendations relating to prior audits. Twelve recommendations from prior years remain under implementation.

IV. Benefits of the capital master plan

14. The thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth progress reports included comprehensive information on the benefits that the capital master plan had delivered, in line with the relevant resolutions and the mandate from Member States.

15. The capital master plan addressed numerous deficiencies that had been left untreated and had accumulated over the years. The plan provided a newly renovated facility that is accessible to all individuals, energy efficient, free of hazardous materials and compliant with the building, fire and safety codes of the host city and that meets all reasonable, modern-day security requirements.

16. The fourteenth and fifteenth progress reports included additional details on the reduction in energy consumption and monetary savings. Updated data on energy consumption to the end of June 2018, with a projection for consumption from July to the end of December 2018, are provided in table 2.

Table 2
Comparison of energy consumption between 2006 and 2017 and estimate for 2018

		Usage (kBTU)[a]		
	Period	*Steam*	*Electricity*	***Total***
Pre-capital master plan (2006–2007)	2006	400 517 070	151 946 050	**552 463 120**
	2007	543 788 070	154 376 554	**698 164 624**
Post-capital master plan (2015)	2015	95 515 200	145 413 981	**240 929 181**
	Percentage reduction (2006 to 2015)	76	4	**56**
Post-capital master plan (2016)	2016	95 477 911	131 072 662	**226 550 573**
	Percentage reduction (2006 to 2016)	76	14	**59**
Post-capital master plan (2017)	2017	127 177 716	122 026 768	**249 204 484**
	Percentage reduction (2006 to 2017)	68	20	**55**
Post-capital master plan (2018)	January to June 2018	63 403 788	61 416 000	**124 819 788**
	Estimated from July to December 2018	63 043 200	60 733 600	**123 776 800**
	Total estimated in 2018	126 446 988	122 149 600	**248 596 588**
	Percentage reduction (2006 to 2018)	68	20	**55**

[a] Thousand British thermal units.

17. In 2015, following the implementation of the capital master plan, the total energy consumption of the Headquarters campus was reduced by more than 56 per cent compared with the total consumption in 2006 prior to the renovation. The projected reduction in energy consumption for 2018 is consistent with reductions achieved in 2016 and 2017.

18. With respect to monetary benefits and savings, there is no linear correlation between the reduction in energy consumption and cost savings, owing to increases in the unit costs of energy and the difference in the rates of electricity and steam.

19. Furthermore, while the newly renovated buildings require less overall maintenance and repair, the newly installed sophisticated systems and equipment require more frequent and costly servicing. In order to maintain the new systems, high levels of technical expertise are required, which the Secretariat does not possess in-house. There is, therefore, a need to retain the services of specialized commercial vendors. In addition, as stipulated in the vendor operations and maintenance manuals, the new systems require more robust and frequent maintenance checks on a regular basis, not only when there is a failure and/or malfunction.

20. Updated data on the costs and monetary savings are provided in table 3.

Table 3
Cost of utilities from 2006 to 2017 and estimates for 2018

(United States dollars)

Description	*2006–2007*	*2008–2009*	*2010–2011*	*2012–2013*	*2014–2015*	*2016–2017*	*2018 estimated*
Electricity	14 536 322	17 301 357	19 337 005	17 501 881	15 983 467	13 026 403	5 504 450
Steam	18 696 194	14 592 256	9 007 534	5 261 620	4 424 149	4 375 326	2 577 920
Water	2 604 228	2 010 285	1 815 000	1 186 000	1 232 292	1 169 277	688 620
Gas and other utilities	65 739	52 871	230 513	86 598	140 600	40 274	16 650
Total	**35 902 483**	**33 956 769**	**30 390 051**	**24 036 099**	**21 780 508**	**18 611 229**	**8 787 640**

21. The actual cost of all utilities (electricity, steam, water, gas and other) of the Headquarters complex in New York has been reduced by more than 48 per cent ($17.3 million) over the past six bienniums, from $35.9 million to $18.6 million, as shown in table 3. The cost is expected to be reduced further in the biennium 2018–2019, to about $17.6 million. Such additional savings of approximately $1 million represent an incremental 6 per cent reduction compared with the previous biennium and an overall reduction of 50.9 per cent compared with the biennium 2006–2007. However, it should be noted that variations in weather are among the main drivers of changes in utilities consumption, so caution should be exercised in making any extrapolations on future use.

V. Financial status of the capital master plan

A. Status of assessments and sources of funding for the capital master plan

22. The total approved funding for the capital master plan project amounts to $2,150.4 million, comprising appropriations for the original project scope of $1,876.7 million, donations of $14.3 million, interest income and the plan's working capital reserve, amounting to $159.4 million, and funding of $100.0 million for the enhanced security upgrades.

23. All approved funding in the amount of $2,150.4 million has been applied in full to the renovation activities so as to meet contractual obligations as they fall due for payment.

24. Table 4 compares the total approved funding for the capital master plan project with the expected cost for the completion of the project.

Table 4
Comparison of the funding for the capital master plan project and the expected cost to completion, as at 31 May 2018

(Millions of United States dollars)

Description	*Amount*	*References*
Total appropriations from 2004 to 2011	1 876.7	Resolutions 57/292, 59/295, 60/248, 60/256, 60/282, 61/251, 62/87 and 64/228
Voluntary contributions	14.3	Received under the capital master plan donations programme

Description	*Amount*	*References*
Use of interest income and the capital master plan working capital reserve	159.4	Resolutions 66/258, 67/246 and 68/247 A
Funding for the enhanced security upgrades	100.0	Contribution by the host country
Total funding available	**2 150.4**	
Project cost of original renovation (excluding Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building and the South Annex Building) and scope requested under the donations programme	2 050.4	
Cost of enhanced security upgrades	100.0	
Total project cost to completion	**2 150.4**	

B. Capital master plan project expenditure and requirements for the remaining project period

25. The estimated final cost of the capital master plan project remains unchanged, at $2,150.4 million. As at 31 July 2018, cumulative expenditure incurred amounted to $2,150.1 million, indicating that 99.9 per cent of the estimated cost to completion has been expended and committed. The latest status of the plan's expenditure and remaining requirements is summarized in table 5.

Table 5
Capital master plan project expenditure and requirements until completion, as at 31 July 2018

(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Expenditure	*Remaining requirements*	
Description	*From project inception to July 2018*	*From August 2018 to December 2019*	*Total*
Capital master plan project			
Design contractual services	168 828.5	–	168 828.5
Staff costs for the Office of the Capital Master Plan	33 806.0	–	33 806.0
Support staff costs	15 903.5	–	15 903.5
Operating and other costs	17 722.5	281.0	18 003.5
Programme management and other consultants	56 172.7	–	56 172.7
Construction and pre-construction	1 414 348.8	–	1 414 348.8
Swing space costs (including rent)	554 600.8	–	554 600.8
Subtotal	**2 261 382.8**	**281.0**	**2 261 663.8**
Prior-period adjustments	9 204.0	–	9 204.0
Adjusted project expenditure	**2 270 586.8**	**281.0**	**2 270 867.8**
Savings from cancellation of obligations	(220 484.8)	–	(220 484.8)
Subtotal	**2 050 102.0**	**281.0**	**2 050 383.0**
Enhanced security upgrade project	100 000.0	–	100 000.0
Total, capital master plan project expenditure	**2 150 102.0**	**281.0**	**2 150 383.0**

26. Table 5 shows that the estimated requirements for the project from August 2018 to December 2019 amount to $281,000, which is the projected cost of legal fees for the arbitration case.

27. The final cost of the residual work (demolition and landscaping, and security-related work at the 42nd and 48th Street entrances) is summarized in table 6.

Table 6
Cost breakdown of interim solutions and residual work
(United States dollars)

Description	*Estimated cost in 2015*	*Estimated cost in 2016*	*Actual cost in 2017*
Interim solutions			
Three new food services	5 000 000	4 300 000	3 600 000
Dag Hammarskjöld Library Building	4 000 000	3 100 000	2 800 000
Classrooms in the third basement area of the North Lawn Building	5 000 000	5 100 000	5 300 000
Subtotal, interim solutions	**14 000 000**	**12 500 000**	**11 700 000**
Residual work			
Demolition and landscaping	20 000 000	19 000 000	19 230 000
42nd and 48th Street entrances	15 000 000	17 100 000	18 050 000
Subtotal, residual work	**35 000 000**	**36 100 000**	**37 280 000**
Total	**49 000 000**	**48 600 000**	**48 980 000**

VI. Arbitration

28. The Organization is engaged in two arbitration proceedings with Skanska, the construction manager for the capital master plan. Each of the arbitration proceedings arose from claims filed against Skanska by a Skanska subcontractor.

29. The first arbitration arose as a result of an arbitration brought against Skanska by its electrical subcontractor, in which the subcontractor claims that it is owed tens of millions of dollars for the work it performed under several contracts with Skanska as part of the capital master plan. Although Skanska has denied the subcontractor's claims in their entirety, Skanska itself claims that if it were found to owe any additional sums to its subcontractor, the liability for such sums should be passed on to the United Nations. The United Nations disputes Skanska's characterization of its rights under the relevant contracts, and the dispute is currently before an arbitral panel, as required under such contracts. Formal proceedings before the arbitral tribunal are in early, pre-hearing stages and involve complicated procedural issues. The Office of Legal Affairs, with the assistance of outside counsel, is actively defending the interests of the Organization in this matter.

30. The second arbitration arose as a result of an arbitration brought against Skanska by its mechanical systems subcontractor, in which the subcontractor claims that it is owed in excess of $4 million for work it performed under contracts with Skanska as part of the capital master plan. Although Skanska has denied the subcontractor's claims, Skanska itself claims that if it were found to owe any additional sums to its subcontractor, the liability for such sums should be passed on to the United Nations. The United Nations disputes Skanska's characterization of its rights under the relevant contracts. Formal proceedings before the arbitral tribunal are still in

preliminary phases involving complex jurisdictional issues and the production of voluminous documentary evidence. The Office of Legal Affairs, with the assistance of outside counsel, is actively defending the interests of the Organization in this matter, including by seeking a ruling that the United Nations has no liability to Skanska for claims brought by Skanska's subcontractors.

VII. Associated costs and the secondary data centre

31. The overall associated cost expenditure amounts to $139.7 million. The cost of the secondary data centre amounts to $19.2 million.

32. The associated costs and the cost of the secondary data centre have been funded under the support account for peacekeeping operations ($4.2 million) and in accordance with section VIII, paragraph 16, of General Assembly resolution 69/274 ($154.7 million).

VIII. Consolidated expenditure and requirements

33. The final consolidated requirements of the capital master plan amount to $2,305.1 million, or $2,309.3 million if the portion funded by the support account for peacekeeping operations is taken into consideration. Details are provided in table 7.

Table 7
Consolidated expenditure as at 31 July 2018 and projected requirements until December 2019

(Millions of United States dollars)

Description	*From project inception to July 2018*	*From August 2018 to December 2019*	*Total*
Project costs			
Capital master plan project	2 050.1	0.3	2 050.4
Enhanced security upgrade	100.0	–	100.0
Subtotal	**2 150.1**	**0.3**	**2 150.4**
Non-project costs			
Associated costs	139.7	–	139.7
Secondary data centre	15.0	–	15.0
Subtotal	**154.7**	–	**154.7**
Consolidated total	**2 304.8**	**0.3**	**2 305.1**
Portion of secondary data centre funded from the support account for peacekeeping operations	4.2	–	4.2
Consolidated total, including portion funded from the support account for peacekeeping operations	**2 309.0**	**0.3**	**2 309.3**

34. Financial statements regarding the project activities and expenditure for the 2017 financial period were completed, consolidated and finalized in March 2018 by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, following established financial reporting processes, in compliance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations. The financial close-out of the capital master plan project will be delayed due to the ongoing arbitration cases.

IX. Actions to be taken by the General Assembly

35. **The Secretary-General recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) Note the progress made since the issuance of the fifteenth annual progress report;

(b) Request the Secretary-General to submit a seventeenth progress report on the project, which should include progress on the arbitration cases and the final cost, to the General Assembly at the main part of its seventy-fourth session.

United Nations A/73/318

General Assembly

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7 August 2018
English
Original: Spanish

Seventy-third session
Item 117 (d) of the provisional agenda*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 6 August 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to inform you that Uruguay has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2019–2021 at the elections to be held on 12 October 2018.

In accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 60/251, I have the honour to transmit herewith the voluntary pledges of Uruguay, reaffirming its commitment to respect, protect and promote human rights (see annex).

The candidature of Uruguay to the Human Rights Council is a testament to its willingness to actively support and defend the United Nations human rights system, which is at the heart of the country's domestic and foreign policies.

(*Signed*) Elbio **Rosselli**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/73/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 6 August 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Uruguay to the Human Rights Council, 2019–2021

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. Uruguay has presented it candidature for membership of the Human Rights Council for the term 2019–2021. Uruguay has been actively involved with the Council since its inception. In that context, it has promoted the adoption of a solid and ambitious legal framework for the fulfilment of the Council's mandate and has helped to make the Council a stronger institution by consistently participating in its work and making constructive contributions aimed at raising standards of protection and strengthening the Council's mechanisms for action. The aspiration to become a member of the Council is a natural result of the principles and objectives of Uruguayan foreign policy.

2. The coherent and active work of Uruguay at the international level, in both the Human Rights Council and the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights, has been based on the basic principles of the universality, interdependence and interrelatedness of human rights, adherence to international law, respect for the principle of the sovereignty of States, and the centrality of human beings as subjects of law.

3. Those principles have consistently underpinned the participation of Uruguay in the Council, which it has undertaken with a view to enhancing the international rights agenda, raise standards of protection and enhance the effectiveness of monitoring bodies.

4. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, Uruguay makes the following voluntary pledges:

Promotion and protection of human rights at the international level

- To continue to contribute to the strengthening of the universal system for the promotion and protection of human rights through an approach that fosters cooperation among States and the effectiveness of the various mechanisms of the system.
- To continue to support the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, including through the provision of non-earmarked financial resources, which will enable the Office to more effectively fulfil its growing number of mandates from States and strengthen its ability to provide valuable technical cooperation to States.
- To keep updating the Uruguayan common core document and submitting national reports to the various treaty bodies, which will be prepared in consultation with the National Human Rights Institution and the Office of the Ombudsman and with civil society, and with the participation of the relevant government actors.
- To promote a more rational, objective and non-selective use of the Council's special procedures and mandates, which will involve improving the Council's working methods.

- To maintain the standing invitation extended by Uruguay in 2005 to all the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, and to provide the necessary facilitation to enable such visits to be conducted without delays or obstacles.
- To continue to promote dialogue, negotiation and consensus-building as pillars of the working methods of the Human Rights Council. The cooperative and non-confrontational approach to dealing with human rights issues must be strengthened.
- To continue to promote an objective, non-selective and non-discriminatory approach, with the understanding that all human rights, be they civil, cultural, economic, political or social, including the right to development, are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing.
- To continue to promote the full participation of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, in the work of the Human Rights Council, working to prevent reprisals against those who cooperate or seek to cooperate with the mechanisms of the Council, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 and Human Rights Council resolution 16/21.
- To continue to work to improve the functioning and effectiveness of the universal periodic review as a fundamental and irreplaceable mechanism of the Council for the fulfilment of its mandate. In that connection, Uruguay pledges to submit its third national report and to continue to participate actively in all country reviews by making recommendations aimed at promoting the strengthening of human rights in the country concerned in an objective and non-selective manner. Uruguay voluntarily submitted its midterm report in 2016.

5. Uruguay hopes to use a new term on the Council to continue to contribute to the achievement of these objectives while highlighting the invaluable role of negotiation and consensus-building, which are the ideal means to make the Council a stronger institution that reflects the diversity and universality of human rights and the shared commitment to protect those rights and prevent them from being undermined.

Promotion and protection of human rights at the national level

- To adopt a protocol of action for the National Human Rights Institution and the Honorary Commission against Racism, Xenophobia and All Other Forms of Discrimination to respond to complaints or petitions concerning cases of racism, xenophobia or any other form of discrimination, to ensure that action can be taken as swiftly as possible against discriminatory behaviour. This will help prevent the consolidation of conflicts and, most importantly, minimize their consequences for the affected persons.
- To expand measures to achieve gender equality and prevent and eradicate gender-based violence, and to adopt the draft comprehensive legislation on human trafficking.
- To fully implement the programme to care for children in street situations, in line with general comment No. 21 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- To expand measures aimed at combating racial discrimination, taking advantage of the momentum created by the activities being undertaken as part of the International Decade for People of African Descent.
- To continue to make efforts to ensure the full realization of the economic, social and cultural rights of Uruguayan society, in particular combating poverty.

- To establish an independent mechanism to promote, protect and monitor implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in accordance with article 33 (2) of the Convention.
- To strengthen monitoring and compliance mechanisms, and to improve access to justice and rights protection for the most vulnerable groups.
- To continue to expand human rights training programmes for civil servants.
- To improve inter-agency care for refugees and migrants.
- To strengthen the national follow-up mechanism for recommendations and observations, which was established in 2016.
- To consolidate the civil society dialogue and consultation system of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a tool to facilitate dialogue with civil society and the involvement of civil society in foreign policy decisions.

United Nations A/73/319

General Assembly

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8 August 2018

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Seventy-third session
Item 76 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the International Court of Justice

Secretary-General's Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 16 of the Revised Terms of Reference, Guidelines and Rules of the Secretary-General's Trust Fund to Assist States in the Settlement of Disputes through the International Court of Justice (A/59/372, annex), and is subsequent to the report submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session (A/72/345) under the item entitled "Report of the International Court of Justice".

II. Mandate

2. The Trust Fund was established in 1989 under the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, following consultations with the President of the International Court of Justice. In accordance with the Revised Terms of Reference, financial assistance is to be provided to States for expenses incurred in connection with: (a) a dispute submitted to the Court by way of a special agreement, on the basis of Article 36, paragraph 1, of its Statute; (b) a dispute submitted to the Court by way of an application on the basis of Article 36, paragraphs 1 and 2, of its Statute, provided certain conditions are fulfilled (see A/59/372, annex, para. 6 (ii)); or (c) the execution of a judgment of the Court.

III. Beneficiaries

3. Subject to the requirements of paragraph 8 of the Revised Terms of Reference, an application for financial assistance from the Fund may be submitted by any State Member of the United Nations, any other State party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice or any State not party to the Statute of the Court having complied with Article 35, paragraph 2, of the Statute.

* A/73/150.

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4. During the period under review (1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018), the Fund did not receive any new applications.

IV. Contributions

5. Voluntary contributions to the Fund may be made by States, intergovernmental organizations, national institutions and non-governmental organizations, and by natural and juridical persons.

6. During the period under review, Finland and Switzerland made the following voluntary contributions to the Fund:

State	*Amount (United States dollars)*	*Financial year*
Finland	12 379	2017
Switzerland	20 450	2018
Total	**32 829**	

7. As at 30 June 2018, the total balance of the Trust Fund was $3,230,392.

V. Needs assessment

8. The Charter of the United Nations, in Article 1, paragraph 1, recognizes the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law as one of the basic purposes of the United Nations and as an essential tool for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Court is the principal judicial organ of the Organization. As noted above, the Fund was created with a view to facilitating a decision by parties to a dispute to seek judicial settlement of their dispute through the Court. While Member States continue to provide financial contributions to the Fund, the number of such contributions remains very low. All States and other relevant entities are urged to give serious consideration to making contributions to the Fund, substantially and on a regular basis.

VI. How to contribute

9. Voluntary contributions to the Fund can be made by bank transfer or by cheque. Cheques should be to the order of the United Nations General Trust Fund, indicating "ICJ Trust Fund (TJA)" in the reference field, and sent to:

United Nations Headquarters
United Nations Treasury
New York, N.Y. 10017
United States of America
Attention: Room No. S-2011

For bank transfer details, please contact the United Nations Treasury (unhq-cashier-office@un.org).

10. For any additional information, please contact the Office of the Legal Counsel, Office of Legal Affairs (tel: + 1 212 963 3999; fax: + 1 212 963 6430).

United Nations A/73/320

General Assembly

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8 August 2018

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Seventy-third session
Item 143 of the provisional agenda*
Joint Inspection Unit

Review of donor reporting requirements across the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to draw the attention of the members of the General Assembly to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of donor reporting requirements across the United Nations system", which is available under the symbol JIU/REP/2017/7.

* A/73/150.

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Seventy-third session
Item 143 of the provisional agenda*
Joint Inspection Unit

Review of donor reporting requirements across the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of donor reporting requirements across the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/2017/7).

* A/73/150.

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Summary

In its report entitled "Review of donor reporting requirements across the United Nations system", the Joint Inspection Unit identified ways to improve donor reporting, to better address donor needs and requirements, including by exploring possibilities for standardization and streamlining, and to enhance the standing of the United Nations system as a responsive and valuable partner for donors.

The present note reflects the views of organizations of the United Nations system on the recommendations contained in the report. The views have been consolidated on the basis of input provided by organizations members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, which welcomed the report and supported some of its conclusions.

I. Introduction

1. In its report entitled "Review of donor reporting requirements across the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/2017/7), the Joint Inspection Unit identified ways to improve donor reporting, to better address donor needs and requirements, including by exploring possibilities for standardization and streamlining, and to enhance the standing of the United Nations system as a responsive and valuable partner for donors.

II. General comments

2. Organizations of the United Nations system welcome the report and appreciate its broad overview on various aspects of donor relations. They generally support the recommendations proposed by the Joint Inspection Unit, underscoring that the ability to implement them depends primarily on donors' readiness.

3. With the rise in non-core voluntary contributions, several organizations see the value of streamlining, harmonizing and standardizing donor reporting, although they caution against making the reporting exercise more onerous, cumbersome or duplicative, in particular where statutory reporting streams are already in place.

4. With regard to the development and adoption of a common reporting template, as proposed in recommendation 6, organizations support the overall idea of exploring standard reporting templates, and cite ongoing practices, such as, in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, the operational template and guidance for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as well as the work promulgated by the Finance and Budget Network of the High-Level Committee on Management.

5. Organizations note that the report does not address the "payment by results" type of agreement used by certain donors, such as the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the use of which is currently being considered by the European Commission.

6. Organizations observe that, whereas the review was ostensibly focused on the United Nations system organizations that had the highest number of donor reports (JIU/REP/2017/7, para. 10), low reporting organizations were also included in the review, possibly making some of observations that may be valid for organizations with a high number of reports not entirely useful for those with a low number of reports. Accordingly, they note it would be advantageous to differentiate organizations by quantity of donor reports in future reviews.

III. Specific comments on the recommendations

Recommendation 1

The governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should encourage the Secretary-General and executive heads of other organizations, in the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to develop a common position and pursue a high-level strategic dialogue with donors, in order to address the challenges posed by the current funding models and practices and the impact of strict earmarking of voluntary contributions and reporting to donors.

7. Organizations support the recommendation and note that, in the light of the nature and complexities of international development interventions, a high-level strategic dialogue for United Nations entities and donors would be desirable. Some

organizations note that such dialogues are ongoing, in the context of mandates from the governing bodies of certain organizations, including the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organization, and the Grand Bargain work stream on harmonized reporting, which is perceived as a good starting point for United Nations coordination.

8. Organizations recognize the possible value of reaching an agreement with at least some key donors, given that it would provide a level of consistency across the United Nations system, facilitate negotiations on funding and reporting arrangements and save on related administrative costs. It would also allow for more collaborative approaches among United Nations entities. Organizations underline however the importance of retaining the flexibility to adapt formats, templates and schedules in agreements with donors.

9. Organizations recognize that, in order to address the challenges posed by the current funding models and practices and the impact of the strict earmarking of voluntary contributions and reporting to donors, there is also a need to focus on building trust and offering adequate transparency.

10. Organizations support the efforts of the Secretary-General as part of the United Nations report on the funding compact.

Recommendation 2

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should put in place measures for ensuring that partnership agreements, concluded at the corporate level with the donors and at the corporate and field levels for individual programmes and projects, spell out the needs and requirements of the donors and the mutual commitments of the organizations and the donors, with respect to the details of reporting on the use of funds provided.

11. Organizations support the recommendation. Several entities point to the fact that they are already implementing the proposed approach. Organizations note that the implementation of the recommendation would help to increase compliance with donor requirements and improve donor satisfaction and suggest considering a possible threshold for donor reporting for proportionally smaller contributions.

12 Organizations note that actions to be undertaken in response to the recommendation should be considered together with recommendation 6, advocating for a single common donor reporting format.

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should encourage better access to, and dissemination and exchange of, information concerning donor reporting among the member States and should ensure that every organization maintains a corporate repository for all contribution agreements and donor reports.

13. Organizations partially support the recommendation. Some organizations point to the ongoing efforts towards enhanced transparency in the context of the International Aid Transparency Initiative common standards, whereas others underscore the necessity of acquiring donor approval in order to disclose and disseminate information on contribution agreements, which are often confidential and not publicly accessible to third parties unless agreed upon and specified by all parties involved.

14. Organizations note that donor reports for specific projects may at times include sensitive information relevant to a specific project, agreement, national context, partner or beneficiary, which may require further review before being shared publicly, resulting in an increase in workload.

15. Some organizations report having central repositories of contribution agreements and reports accessible to staff members, although some large, decentralized organizations find collection of all donor reporting published at the country and regional levels challenging and suggest addressing the recommendation in the context of document retention policies.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should regularly update guidance on donor reporting and put in place measures for the professional skills development and training needed to improve reporting to donors, for personnel at headquarters and in the field.

16. Organizations support the recommendation and note that, in those cases in which guidance on reporting and the corresponding capacity-building is not already in place, they are being introduced incrementally.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should work systematically with donors to include in donor agreements the costs associated with preparing donor reports.

17. Organizations generally support the recommendation, even though some find it challenging to quantify the actual costs associated with preparing donor reports. Organizations note that, although standard donor reporting costs are covered by direct project and programme support costs, specific or ad hoc reporting requirements and associated costs must be discussed separately and included in the donor agreement.

Recommendation 6

The Secretary-General and executive heads of other United Nations system organizations should, preferably within the framework of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, develop and adopt a common report template accommodating the information needs and requirements of donors and the regulatory frameworks and capacities of the organizations, as a basis for negotiations with donors.

18. Organizations generally support the overall aim of the recommendation. Organizations note, however, that the recommendation could have been further elaborated by specifying how the diversity of the requirements of donors and the regulatory frameworks and capacities of the organizations could be accommodated. They caution against creating duplicative reporting streams for those entities that are bound by their statuary reporting with defined formats.

19. Organizations note that more explicit linkages between the recommendation and parallel initiatives that are being undertaken in the context of the Grand Bargain on harmonized reporting and on transparency could have been spelled out, in order to avoid duplicating efforts and leaving important actors out of the process, in particular non-governmental organizations.

20. However, some organizations note that, given that the Grand Bargain work stream on harmonized reporting, and its proposed common reporting template,

referred to as the "8+3" template, is still in the pilot phase, it is too early to determine whether a common reporting template is practical or feasible.

21. The Secretariat notes that, for the past three years, it has been using the financial reporting format promulgated by the Finance and Budget Network.

Recommendation 7

The governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to task, and adequately support, the internal audit and evaluation offices of their respective organizations with ensuring that the relevant oversight reports provide the required levels of assurance that would help to minimize reporting to individual donors on the use of their earmarked contributions.

22. Organizations take note that the recommendation is addressed to governing bodies and underscore its link to the proposed high-level dialogue with donors, which should include discussions on the reliance on internal audits and evaluation for assurance to donors, as set out in recommendation 1.

23. Organizations note that the ability to implement the proposed recommendation will depend on the readiness of donors to consolidate reporting on the use of their earmarked contributions.

24. Organizations also note that that undertaking fiduciary oversight functions such as specific audits and evaluations in order to fulfil donor requirements on the use of their earmarked contributions, including to satisfy specific concerns and needs regarding assurance of the proper use of funds, requires a governance structure, resourcing level, organizational set-up and skill set that are different to those currently in place.

25. Organizations observe that the review did not sufficiently articulate the departure from risk-based auditing and the need for resources to pursue ad hoc audits, noting that internal audits are conducted on the basis of a risk-based audit plan to satisfy the needs of a given entity and its governing body. Undertaking specific audits, upon the request of donors, falls out of the scope of such risk-based plans and requires a different governance structure, infrastructure and skill set to fulfil the needs of specific groups of stakeholders.

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General Assembly

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Seventy-third session
Item 25 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Operational activities for development: South-South cooperation for development

State of South-South cooperation

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 72/237, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it, at its seventy-third session, a comprehensive report on the state of South-South cooperation. The report focuses on support that the United Nations development system has provided to South-South initiatives of Member States at the national, regional and global levels in efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related international agreements in the biennium 2017–2018. In addition to highlighting the South-South policy dialogues, knowledge exchanges and partnerships that the United Nations development system has supported, the report points to constraints that need to be overcome and offers recommendations to pave the way forward.

* A/73/150.

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I. Introduction

1. Through its adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[1] the world community has agreed on a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity, with the overarching goal of eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda has created a sense of common purpose to ensure prosperity for all on an inclusive and healthy planet. The present report, along with my two previous reports on the state of South-South cooperation,[2] highlights the actions of the United Nations system in support of the efforts of developing countries to implement the new Agenda and their national priorities in the spirit of South-South solidarity.

2. The report highlights several positive trends that require the attention and sustained support of all stakeholders: (a) the measures taken by United Nations organizations to place South-South cooperation at the centre of their strategic priorities, following the wishes of developing countries to accelerate sustainable development on their own terms; (b) the promising efforts of United Nations organizations and Member States to turn South-South cooperation into a force to improve access by the global South to tested tools for poverty eradication, food security, industrial innovation and economic growth; and (c) the efforts to bolster South-South city-to-city cooperation, since 68 per cent of the world's population is projected to live in urban areas by 2050, including rapidly expanding areas of the global South.

3. As shown in the report, close to 30 United Nations entities have designed policies and programmes that draw on the expertise, experience, technology and many other resources that are available in the developing world. Increasingly, Member States receive the support of United Nations organizations for the convening of South-South policy dialogues, which are the wellspring of ideas on how best to eradicate poverty, hunger and other deprivations based on the policy solutions that developing countries have devised and found effective.

4. In addition, the report focuses on numerous innovative approaches, including South-South learning events, online platforms, networks, communities of practice and expert groups that United Nations organizations support to bolster the capacities of developing countries to manage their own development initiatives more effectively, highlighting the numerous South-South and triangular cooperation partnerships in which the organizations are actively engaged. Prominent aspects of these partnerships are the centres of excellence and trust funds that several countries have jointly established with various United Nations agencies to facilitate South-South exchanges in different areas.

5. Nurturing a culture of multilateral cooperation within and across regions remains at the heart of the work of the United Nations development system to advance global integration through South-South alliances. In this regard, the United Nations regional commissions have spearheaded South-South initiatives to establish or strengthen systems and mechanisms that are essential to effective decision-making at the national and regional levels. That work has also equipped the different regions with systems to gather and analyse statistical data and to monitor natural hazards and climate change challenges.

6. These developments come in tandem with an increase in international contributions for South-South cooperation for development, exceeding the $20 billion in contributions received in 2013: as a result of higher contributions from China, India

[1] Resolution 70/1.

[2] A/72/297 and A/71/208.

and Saudi Arabia from 2014 onwards, total contributions for South-South cooperation in 2018 may exceed the level received in 2013.

7. Despite the progress made, the report notes that knowledge gaps and administrative and financial hurdles have continued to hinder South-South cooperation from having optimal development impact. It also identifies the difficulties that some organizations have encountered in the monitoring and evaluation of their support for South-South and triangular cooperation. To overcome those constraints, some organizations have decided on a jointly planned approach to South-South cooperation and have developed tools, methodologies and guidance to better assess their engagement in this regard.

8. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for the consideration of Member States, along with other recommendation that I intend to present for consideration during the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which is to be held in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

9. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation has relied on information obtained from United Nations funds and programmes, the specialized agencies and the regional commissions in the preparation of this report, which is more illustrative than exhaustive in its presentation of the range of South-South initiatives supported by the organizations of the United Nations development system in the biennium 2017–2018.

II. Support of the organizations of the United Nations development system for South-South and triangular cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. Integration and mainstreaming of South-South cooperation into policy frameworks and strategies of the United Nations development system

10. Many United Nations organizations have formalized their support for the flow of ideas, good practices, policy choices, technologies and other development solutions between developing countries as a central aspect of their workplans. This commitment is evident in the strategic frameworks, plans, work programmes and budgets of a number of United Nations organizations for the 2014–2017 and 2018–2021 periods,[3] which confirm that close to 30 United Nations entities embrace South-South cooperation as an effective modality to provide technical assistance, forge collaborative alliances, mobilize development finance and garner in-kind contributions for socioeconomic progress. In this regard, many United Nations organizations have established and/or strengthened specialized units and set up programmes with dedicated human and financial resources to promote South-South cooperation.

11. In November 2017, the South-South cooperation action plan was adopted at the twenty-third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations

[3] See A/72/297 and A/71/208 for details on how individual United Nations organizations have reflected their support for South-South cooperation in their respective strategic plans, frameworks and budgets.

Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Bonn, Germany, as part of the Secretary-General's climate change engagement strategy (2017–2021). The action plan, which is a strategic guide for United Nations system efforts on South-South climate cooperation, is supported and coordinated by the Office for South-South Cooperation.

12. To improve inter-agency coordination and coherence, three United Nations Rome-based organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), leverage South-South and triangular cooperation both individually and as a team in order to deliver on their shared mandate to improve access to an adequate supply of nutritious food.

13. For example: WFP supports the efforts of developing countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 on ending hunger by 2030 by sharing empirical evidence on localized solutions and facilitating the mobilization of additional technical and capacity development support from other countries; IFAD recognizes South-South and triangular cooperation as a key area of work in its strategic framework for the 2016–2025 period; and FAO has taken measures to mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation into its policy and operational work, to strengthen guidelines for South-South and triangular cooperation and to develop capacity support tools, including through targeted training and a related e-learning course for FAO staff.

14. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supports South-South and triangular cooperation exchanges related to the environment through its leadership of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, an inter-agency collaboration that also draws on the expertise of four other United Nations organizations, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

15. In its strategic plan 2018–2021, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) affirms its role in supporting capacity development, sharing information and knowledge and enabling partnerships. In this context, UN-Women promotes South-South and triangular cooperation as an effective and efficient mechanism to attain the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets to ensure the welfare of women and girls. Its strategy is also designed to make certain that countries have access to avenues for South-South cooperation and development solutions to bring about gender equality and women's empowerment, and that national institutions have strengthened capacities to forge new partnerships and leverage diverse sources of financing for South-South cooperation.

16. UNDP has mainstreamed South-South and triangular cooperation into its strategic plan and integrated results and resources framework for 2018–2021, in line with the commitments set forth in its publication "Accelerating Sustainable Development: South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Achieve the SDGs", published in 2016. Moreover, its commitment is crucially linked to the opportunities and demands unleashed by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, in 2015. This focus has been reinforced through the recent reform of the United Nations development system adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 72/279. These elements strengthen the role of South-South and triangular cooperation as a strategic approach within a reinvigorated United Nations development system that is better able to connect national efforts to regional and global networks of solidarity and support at the country level. Furthermore, the integrator function of UNDP, as shown, inter alia, in its country support platforms, offers a chance to deploy South-South and triangular cooperation at the core of

country-led efforts to address complex development problems to accelerate progress towards sustainable development. Country support platforms provide a potentially powerful tool to embed South-South and triangular cooperation within a wider network of partnerships and actions at the field level, based on a high degree of co-creation and co-ownership with United Nations and non-United Nations entities. The platforms thus enhance both the complementary role of South-South cooperation in traditional development assistance as well as its effectiveness in promoting transformational change. At the same time, the strong emphasis on platforms of innovation and experimentation and the exchange of knowledge, expertise and skills is particularly well suited to the ethos, purpose and practice of South-South and triangular cooperation. To that end, UNDP has developed country capacities to integrate the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and other international agreements into national development plans and budgets and to analyse progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals using innovative data-driven solutions.

B. Innovative approaches to United Nations support to South-South cooperation

17. There is growing consensus throughout the United Nations system that South-South learning and policy coordination and the transfer of expertise and technology are effective ways to accelerate sustainable development. The commitment to eradicating poverty and related deprivations has led many United Nations organizations to support South-South initiatives that benefit the least developed countries and low-income countries, as well as middle-income countries.

18. To catalyse the creation of knowledge-based jobs, the International Trade Centre (ITC) is building digital entrepreneurial skills in East Africa with expertise provided by its partners in India and Kenya. According to ITC, in the expanding Kenyan information technology sector, the skills gap has been exacerbated by a gender gap. As a solution, ITC is working with its partners to equip young people from across East Africa with the skills and experience needed to thrive in the fast-growing digital economy of the region. The ITC initiative #SheGoesDigital provides Kenyan women with a 40-day training programme in social media and digital marketing, followed by internships with companies seeking such skills. Another initiative, the Indo-East African Internship Programme, identifies promising East African information technology graduates and places them with Indian companies for three- to six-month internships, following which they return to their countries with improved skills and increased experience to contribute to the growth of vibrant technology sectors in the region.

19. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is supporting South-South and triangular cooperation to boost the capacity of women inventers. This addresses a clear need since, according to the 2017 WIPO Patent Cooperation Treaty Yearly Review, only 31 per cent of the patents filed with the organization included at least one female. Through a collaboration with the Korean Intellectual Property Office, WIPO has supported an international education programme on "Ideas, Invention, Innovation and Intellectual Property", which provides training to women in the use of intellectual property rights so that they may benefit from their own creativity.

20. IFAD has issued a publication on innovative ways to reduce poverty and alleviate its effects through the sharing of South-South knowledge and experience

within and across regions,[4] including support for the efforts of rural youth to identify and share solutions that have reduced poverty in rural Asia and Africa. These methods foster learning, knowledge-sharing and the scaling-up of practical solutions that have been field tested and validated for effectiveness in reducing poverty.

21. Making cities resilient to disasters through South-South and triangular cooperation is central to the work of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). A UNISDR-led campaign has supported city-to-city exchanges across countries to transfer knowledge and share good practices and lessons learned in making cities resilient to disasters. In the Americas, 15 city-to-city exchanges have taken place in Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and the United States of America.

22. To make new health technologies and treatments accessible to people who need them, the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID), hosted and administered by the World Health Organization (WHO), applies South-South cooperation approaches to connect entities responsible for developing innovations with the people who would benefit most from them, notably, people in resource-limited settings who are affected by HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. By working with those institutions or actors, including researchers, academics, product-development partnerships, the private sector and others involved in research and development of modern technologies, UNITAID is helping to identify promising, close-to-market products that offer innovative health solutions.

23. In 2017, the Office for South-South Cooperation launched the Youth for South: Advanced Youth Leadership Programme, in partnership with the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, the Finance Centre for South-South Cooperation, the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation, *Fredskorpset* (FK) Norway, IFAD and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The programme brings together young leaders from Governments and various sectors to learn and adapt South-South and triangular cooperation tools and methods to scale up sustainable development solutions in their local communities, institutions and countries. A pilot orientation session for the programme took place in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 2018 with the participation of 24 young professionals from 22 developing countries.

24. The United Nations Capital Development Fund, through its challenge funds, provides incentives to South-based financial service providers to direct their solutions to underserved markets in least developed countries and to share the lessons learned with other firms based in the global South. The Fund supports South-South learning and helps to create new markets and to reduce risks in public and private investments. It does so by supporting innovations in areas such as digital payments through its Mobile Money for the Poor and the MicroLead programmes, which target the 2 billion adults worldwide who lack access to financial services.[5] The Fund also brings financial services to hard-to-reach populations through the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme, jointly administered with UNDP, including funding from the European Union and the Governments of Australia and New Zealand.

25. The Technical Cooperation Programme of the International Atomic Energy Agency uses multiple mechanisms to promote South-South and triangular cooperation. Regional agreements, including the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training, the Cooperative Agreement for Arab States in

[4] For more information see: https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/40257372/youth_engagement.pdf/ba904804-060c-49ed-83c5-bd5d70a99335.

[5] See: http://www.uncdf.org/microlead/homepage.

Asia for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology, the Regional Cooperation Agreement for the Promotion of Nuclear Science and Technology in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training in Nuclear Science and Technology for the Asia and Pacific, were all established with the specific aim of intensifying collaboration through the implementation of demand-driven technical cooperation projects.

C. Actions taken by the organizations of the United Nations development system in support of the efforts of Member States to achieve sustainable development through South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation

Policy dialogue and development

26. The number of South-South policy dialogues has grown significantly. Those supported by United Nations organizations during the reporting period include discussions on the role of South-South and triangular cooperation in international development cooperation as well as South-South cooperation to implement the 2030 Agenda through the lens of poverty eradication, trade and investment, regional integration, gender parity in entrepreneurship, capacity development and rapid urbanization.

27. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs supports multi-stakeholder policy dialogues as part of the Development Cooperation Forum organized every other year during the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. During the reporting period, the Department, together with the Government of Argentina, organized a high-level symposium of the Forum in Buenos Aires, from 6 to 8 September 2017, on the theme "South-South and triangular cooperation for achieving the 2030 Agenda: Building innovative and inclusive partnerships". The symposium served as an informal preparatory event for the 2018 high-level meeting of the Forum and for the upcoming Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation.

28. Economic growth and human development galvanized by enhanced South-South trade and investment are among the core topics for dialogues supported by UNDP and other United Nations entities. The Office for South-South Cooperation and UNDP, through the South-South Cooperation Global Thinkers Initiative, organized two workshops in 2017 and 2018 to discuss the policy and legal environment conducive to South-South investment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants at the two forums discussed the contributions of South-South investment with respect to the achievement of the Goals in Asia (August 2017) and in the Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region (May 2018).

29. To promote regional and interregional cooperation in Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with key partners, organized the 2017 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to serve as the platform for the exchange of views and follow-up on the implementation of Agenda 2063, adopted by the African Union, and the 2030 Agenda. The Forum, which draws participants from other Southern countries in addition to African Union member States, serves as a continental platform for promoting peer learning and the exchange of solutions and best practices.

30. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has provided technical cooperation services to regional and subregional organizations to further strengthen their integration efforts. The Commission has made recommendations to

both the Andean Community and to the Union of South American Nations on how to increase intraregional trade among their members. In addition, the Commission has worked jointly with the Latin American Integration Association and the Andean Development Corporation on the establishment of the Latin America–Asia-Pacific Observatory to promote cooperation and strengthen links between the countries of both regions.

31. In 2017, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific facilitated a policy dialogue between women entrepreneurs and Government officials on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Business and Investment Summit, with a view to ensuring inclusive dialogue in the shaping of national economic and entrepreneurship policies. Participants from countries in the ASEAN and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation regions discussed key barriers and innovative strategies to foster women's entrepreneurship across Asia and the Pacific.

32. To bolster equitable economic growth, IFAD organized an international conference on South-South and triangular cooperation in November 2017 entitled "Leveraging Innovations from the Global South to Support Rural Transformation". At the conference, which attracted 50 Government ministers, participants adopted the Brasilia Declaration and Action Agenda on South-South and triangular cooperation,[6] which outlines how they resolved to work together on specific areas to promote such cooperation as an instrument to help countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

33. The opportunities and challenges posed by rapid urbanization have become a pressing concern in South-South dialogues. The Second Arab Ministerial Forum on Housing and Urban Development was held in Rabat on 21 and 22 December 2017 to discuss the progress made in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda in the Arab States region. The Forum, attended by representatives from 20 Arab countries and other partners, provided a platform for reflection on persistent and emerging challenges facing Arab countries, the operationalization of the Arab Strategy for Housing and Sustainable Urban Development and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

34. In 2017, UNFPA co-organized an international conference in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to hear perspectives from the South on sustainable cities, human development and international migration. Government ministers and 250 delegates from the 26 States members of the intergovernmental organization Partners in Population and Development attended the conference, which called for strengthening the use of population data for sustainable development.

35. In May 2017, WFP and China jointly organized the international symposium on demand-driven South-South cooperation. The objective was to translate the strategic vision of WFP to broker practical South-South endeavours through the matching of country-led demands with appropriate Chinese solutions to achieve the 2030 Agenda, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 2. During the symposium, 38 proposals for South-South initiatives from different WFP country offices were collected.

Knowledge-sharing for capacity development

36. Many United Nations organizations support South-South cooperation in response to the requests for assistance from Member States to strengthen human and institutional capacities for the formulation and implementation of national

[6] See: https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714174/40212353/Brasilia+declaration+and+action+agenda_21NOV2017.pdf/256b4a83-dea0-42ee-928d-647421b9e670.

development policies and strategies. The South-South cooperation practices used to share knowledge, expertise and technology for human and institutional capacity development have increased in number, scope and complexity owing to a related rise in the number of actors and the challenges to be addressed.

37. Over time, the communities of practice and networks for economic, social and environmental South-South cooperation have grown to include professionals in various disciplines. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has partnered with institutions, including the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, to establish a community of practice on South-South cooperation for children. The aim is to leverage the strengths and capacities of the members of the community to promote and expand its outreach by engaging new practitioners.

38. In response to the capacity needs of the least developed countries, the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change supports the work of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, which provides technical guidance to Governments on the formulation and implementation of their national adaptation plans on climate change. Such activities promote the sharing of experiences, best practices and lessons learned, as well as peer-to-peer learning through various modalities such as regional training workshops and the annual and regional expos on national plans, including case studies on the plans.

39. The growing use of online platforms, a breakthrough in the promotion of South-South cooperation, enables United Nations organizations to build stronger human and institutional capacities with partner networks for the sharing of knowledge, experience and various solutions. UNDP has created virtual centres of excellence for South-South cooperation. During the reporting period, the UNDP initiative for inclusive and sustainable new communities was implemented in the following six countries: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Rwanda, Uganda and Viet Nam. In two of those countries, the programme facilitated the establishment of virtual centres of excellence for South-South cooperation: one for Latin America and the Caribbean (http://cvis3.cebem.org/) and the other for Rwanda (http://fonerwa.org/ksp/).

40. In 2017, UNDP, under its Sustainable Development Goals Fund, launched an online library of good practices and lessons learned on the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, including those pertaining to South-South cooperation. The library links to publications from key United Nations agencies, development banks and academic institutions and hosts vast knowledge resources aimed at facilitating cooperation between developing countries and sharing their experiences in the implementation of joint programmes.

41. United Nations Volunteers programme has an Online Volunteering service that fosters South-South exchanges through the mobilization of volunteers from the global South to contribute to peace and development. The service connects organizations with online volunteers who contribute their skills over the Internet to strengthen the impact of peace and development work. The service is particularly notable for its promotion of inclusive South-South collaboration. In 2017, the volunteers, 70 per cent of whom (17,893 people) came from developing countries, supported non-governmental organizations, public institutions and United Nations agencies operating in the global South. Through its Online Volunteering service, the programme has connected 3,500 organizations directly to expertise across the world.

42. During the reporting period, the United Nations System Staff College has held an annual course in Bonn on how the United Nations can play a catalytic role in supporting South-South and triangular cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The course helps to ensure that the organizations of the United Nations development system has staff trained to promote South-South cooperation as part of

the Secretary-General's goal of repositioning the system to implement the 2030 Agenda.

43. The Office for South-South Cooperation engages United Nations organizations and Member States through its innovative web portal (www.unsouthsouth.org). The portal, which showcases the work of numerous partners on South-South and triangular cooperation in their respective focus areas, functions as a tool linking agencies and Governments, enabling them to share knowledge, locate experts and undertake outreach and advocacy on issues of critical importance to the South. The portal is available in three of the official United Nations languages and will be available in Arabic, Chinese and Russian by the end of 2018.

Partnership-building and innovative financing

44. Sustainable Development Goal 17 challenges the international community to leverage South-South partnerships as a means of applying science, technology and innovation to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda. Experience shows that these partnerships are essential to the mobilization of technical know-how, technology transfer, development finance and in-kind contributions for development. The establishment of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, which was formally launched in the host country, Turkey, on 22 September 2017, was a significant achievement in the area of South-South technology transfer during the reporting period.

45. To better harness the complementary contribution of South-South partnerships to sustainable development, United Nations organizations and their partners have established a growing number of centres of excellence, financing facilities, trust funds and other mechanisms to maximize the development impact of South-South cooperation. For example, a notable trend is the establishment of centres of excellence and trust funds to spur greater South-South cooperation between emerging economies and other developing countries, revealing the role played by dynamic Southern economies as they shoulder greater global responsibilities in line with the principles of South-South solidarity. The WFP centres of excellence in Brazil and China provide a mechanism that facilitates the sharing of information on efforts to improve food security and nutrition.

46. The Economic Commission for Europe supports South-South and triangular cooperation through its International Public-Private Partnership Centre of Excellence. In pursuance of its goal to reduce the time and cost of facilitating the development and implementation of public-private partnerships, the Centre develops and disseminates international best practices and standards on such partnerships and provides training for public officials and other stakeholders.

47. The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia, established in 2009 by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific through its Multi-Donor Trust Fund, is an intergovernmental institution owned and managed by its more than 30 member States and collaborating countries. The warning system enables member States to gather information at much lower costs than individual early warning systems, particularly for high-impact, low-frequency hazards.

48. A new innovative trust fund jointly established by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific supports an interregional partnership linking stakeholders in Asia and Latin America. Both Regional Commissions worked during the first half of 2017 with the cybersecretariat of the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation in the design of the trust fund to support projects that promote interregional cooperation among the 36 member States of the Forum. Collaborative relations centre on: trade

and investment promotion; science, technology and innovation; infrastructure and transportation; public policies and public-private partnerships for sustainable growth; and public policies to reduce inequality and improve social cohesion.

49. Funding facilities are an additional mechanism that many United Nations organizations establish with public and or private partners to support South-South cooperation. In early 2018, IFAD and the Ministry of Finance of China signed a supplementary funds agreement establishing the China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility to further strengthen IFAD engagement in this kind of cooperation. The activities to be funded by the Facility include knowledge exchange in areas under the IFAD mandate and capacity-building for policymakers, development practitioners, project staff, non-governmental organizations and others in developing countries. These activities also include resource mobilization from the private sector in China and other developing countries and the promotion of rural South-South investments through the identification of rural investment opportunities in the global South, such as public-private partnerships and business-to-business links across developing countries.

50. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) uses multi-stakeholder partnerships to upgrade slums. It promotes its Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme through collaboration with the European Commission and the secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. Through the programme, UN-Habitat has reached out to 35 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including 160 cities. It has provided the necessary enabling framework for improving the lives of at least 2 million slum dwellers, based on its core principle of "leaving no one behind".

51. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) integrates South-South cooperation into its overall partnership engagement with actors who offer support for finding a solution to the refugee situation. Strengthening and diversifying such partnerships constitute one of the UNHCR strategic priorities for the 2017–2021 period.[7]

United Nations support to regional and interregional South-South initiatives

52. Many of the South-South activities supported by organizations of the United Nations development system enable developing countries to nurture a culture of multilateral cooperation to address shared regional and global challenges. South-South cooperation is also essential to administrative and decision-making processes, including the provision of collaborative frameworks and cross-border and interregional programmes, as well as standards, regulatory arrangements, implementation mechanisms and many other public goods. For example, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction facilitates South-South and triangular cooperation through the exchange of good practices and expertise at the global and regional levels, mainly through regional and global platforms on disaster risk reduction. The Office also supports the strengthening of the capacity of regional intergovernmental organizations in all regional economic communities that have integrated disaster risk reduction programmes and monitors the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as a basis for their internal programmes and policies and subregional strategies.

53. During the reporting period, the Economic Commission for Africa supported the establishment of "Solution Exchange Africa", a community of practice that involves South-South exchanges of knowledge for African professionals (http://solutionexchange-un.net/Africa). The exchange has 801 members, including African development

[7] See: http://www.unhcr.org/5894558d4.pdf.

planners (52 per cent of the total) from 51 African countries, and representatives of African statistical communities (48 per cent of the total) from 22 African countries.[8] The Commission also led the collaboration on the establishment of the Consortium to Stem Illicit Financial Flows from Africa. Through cooperation with the Centre for Trade Policy and Law at Carleton University in Ottawa, the Commission provides technical assistance to African member States and their stakeholders in the design, negotiation and implementation of international trade and economic development strategies.

54. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has used its policy forums, knowledge and practitioner networks and capacity-building activities to assist many developing countries, with a special focus on the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Through the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade and Transport in Asia and the Pacific, the Commission convened experts from Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand to share experiences and good practices in establishing single-window and paperless trade solutions with Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mongolia. In addition, with the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Commission organized capacity-building activities for research and technical training sessions as well as workshops on trade agreements in the region.

55. To boost the capacity of national statistics offices in Latin America, the Latin America and Caribbean Demographic Centre of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean has continued to improve its interactive computer software for the retrieval of data for small areas by microcomputer (REDATAM), which is used for processing and mapping census and survey data for local and regional analysis to provide technical assistance and support to national statistical offices. At the present time, there are approximately 1,600 registered users of the software.

56. In May 2017, ILO constituents in the Africa region adopted the "South-South Cooperation and Decent Work in Africa", a framework for action in the context of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063. The framework provides for the creation of a South-South Cooperation Coordination Facility in Africa.[9] In addition, ILO and the Government of China have facilitated regional learning between China and member States of ASEAN, including knowledge-sharing on employment services among the ASEAN "Plus Three" countries.

57. The WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil has promoted initiatives focused on capacity-strengthening services in Zero Hunger approaches. The Centre also supported the work of the African Union to establish its Pan-African school feeding network, which enables countries in the region to engage as solution providers and solution seekers in peer-learning initiatives.

58. WHO has responded to the requests of Member States to strengthen the capacity of international relations officers on health-related diplomacy in the Latin America region. The Pan American Health Organization created a programme to strengthen cooperation on health issues in the Americas in partnership with the Center for International Relations in Health of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, which promotes collaboration for global health and South-South cooperation. Representatives of 33 member States participated in a related training programme on areas including diplomacy and health cooperation, global health challenges, global health

[8] See: https://www.uneca.org/stories/eca-launches-african-statistical-community.

[9] International Labour Organization, "South-South Cooperation for Decent Work in Africa (framework for action)", March 2017.

governance, health in regional and subregional integration processes and health issues in foreign policy in the Americas.

59. Some United Nations organizations employ South-South cooperation approaches in the provision of consultancy and other services in emergency situations. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), through its Technical Support Facilities, provides rapid and expert technical consultancy support from the nearest sources to countries requiring assistance in responding to the AIDS epidemic.

60. UNHCR has facilitated visits among representatives of Governments participating in the United Nations comprehensive refugee response framework[10] so that they may learn from one another. In this regard, Uganda welcomed a mission from Ethiopia, Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania to exchange knowledge and good practices.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

61. Many United Nations entities encounter difficulties in monitoring and evaluating their support for South-South initiatives, but some have designed methodologies to assess performance and measure the impact of their various interventions. FAO, IFAD and WFP, have adopted a collaborative approach to the monitoring and evaluation of South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives based on their common vision and complementary approaches for delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, the three agencies have agreed to elaborate indicators based on the 2030 Agenda for use in measuring South-South and triangular cooperation projects and programmes in their respective areas of competence. FAO has developed a global database of its South-South and triangular initiatives, which is publicly accessible on its website and searchable on an interactive map (http://www.fao.org/south-south-gateway/en/).

62. In the Americas, the Committee on South-South Cooperation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean supports the efforts of member States to better define, monitor, evaluate and report on their South-South and triangular cooperation endeavours. The technical secretariat of the Committee presents a biennial report on South-South and triangular cooperation activities at the sessions of the Commission.

63. At UNFPA, planning and monitoring mechanisms for South-South cooperation have been put in place through an internal planning and reporting tool, the Strategic Information System. Using this online application, field offices are able to input and articulate their use of South-South cooperation to achieve results, and to track progress. Furthermore, in its resource planning system, UNFPA has instituted a financial "tag" to track expenditures on South-South cooperation. UNDP tracks contributions to South-South cooperation at the country level in a similar manner, through its annual reports, as well as through its integrated results and resources framework, which features a dedicated global South-South output indicator and a South-South cooperation "marker".

64. In the previous UNICEF strategic plan for 2014–2017, contributions and results for South-South cooperation were tracked and reported through the annual reports of the country offices, which included a specific section on engagement in South-South cooperation.

[10] Resolution 71/1, annex I.

D. Institutional and operational constraints that United Nations organizations encounter in optimizing their support for South-South cooperation

65. A 2018 United Nations inter-agency survey by the Office for South-South Cooperation shows that the lack of an Organization-wide strategy is the main factor that hinders optimal support to South-South cooperation at the policy and operational levels in several agencies. The low level of core funding for South-South cooperation also hampers an effective response to the numerous requests by Member States for United Nations assistance. The fact that a limited number of staff are assigned to this growing area of work presents another challenge, as does inadequate knowledge about South-South cooperation modalities in some organizations of the United Nations system. Moreover, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism has highlighted the difficulty of identifying partners in the South with expertise in countering terrorism.

66. At the country level, poor coordination among agencies frequently leads to unclear roles while the differing perceptions of Headquarters and country offices and teams often pose challenges. Implementation processes are further complicated by the multiplicity of partners and diverging interests in South-South initiatives. The identification and matching of the supply of South-South capacities and demands through the use of online platforms is a costly undertaking, often constrained by budgetary shortfalls. The United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation that the Office for South-South Cooperation is coordinating in consultation with other United Nations entities should help to alleviate some of these constraints.

III. Enhanced coordination and coherence of the support of the United Nations development system to South-South cooperation

67. In 2018, the Office for South-South Cooperation prepared its strategic framework for 2018–2021, with a portfolio of activities aimed at enhancing the coherence and coordination of support to South-South and triangular cooperation across the United Nations development system. The strategic framework, which was presented to the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Office for Project Services in June 2018, builds on the views expressed by Member States during various consultations and on the measures to further strengthen the Office, as articulated in my report to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation (SSC/19/3).

68. In implementing the framework, the Office for South-South Cooperation is focusing its work on enabling Member States to make informed policy choices for South-South and triangular cooperation and the effective coordination of United Nations support to that cooperation. The Office also has committed to assisting Member States as they develop capacities through the sharing of South-South knowledge and experiences and the forging of strategic South-South and triangular partnerships to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

69. The Office for South-South Cooperation, in response to the directives of Member States, has held intergovernmental and inter-agency consultations, including on the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in 2019. These consultations have yielded many ideas that are guiding the ongoing preparatory work for the conference.

70. As requested by Member States, a formalized and strengthened inter-agency coordination mechanism has been created. Coordinated by the Office for South-South

Cooperation, the mechanism encourages joint support to South-South and triangular initiatives and the sharing of information on development activities and results achieved. A total of 27 United Nations entities have already nominated focal points to the mechanism, which will also support the development of a system-wide South-South cooperation strategy and substantive inputs from the entities of the United Nations development system to inform discussions among Member States in preparation for the High-level Conference in 2019.

71. As mentioned above, the Office for South-South Cooperation is coordinating the implementation of the action plan for South-South cooperation of my climate change engagement strategy (2017–2021). The action plan is being rolled out through strengthened collaboration among entities of the United Nations development system and enhanced partnerships among various stakeholders.

72. The Office has continued to convene the annual Global South-South Development Expo and related inter-agency meetings. In 2017 the Expo was hosted by the Government of Turkey. More than 800 delegates from over 120 Member States took part in the four-day event, attending 37 sessions and presenting more than 200 solutions. The next Expo, marking 10 years since the first one in 2008, will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 28 to 30 November 2018.

73. The Office for South-South Cooperation has intensified the forging of partnerships to support Member States in enhancing and expanding their South-South initiatives. The Office has entered into partnership agreements with: national entities of 12 Member States; 23 United Nations and intergovernmental organizations; and 12 civil society organizations, foundations and academic institutions.

74. Together with Government and United Nations partners, the Office for South-South Cooperation has mapped, documented and disseminated development solutions in nine issues of its "South-South in Action" series, and over 20 additional issues are currently in production. The Office has also compiled two publications on good practices in South-South and triangular cooperation, outlining over 100 Southern solutions across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

75. The Office for South-South Cooperation web portal (www.unsouthsouth.org) has linked United Nations agencies and Governments, facilitating engagement, the sharing of knowledge, as well as outreach and advocacy on issues of critical importance to the South. In addition, 14 United Nations system partners are showcasing South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives in their respective focus areas using the web portal.

76. In response to my call, the Office for South-South Cooperation is supporting the preparation of the first independent report on South-South and triangular cooperation. The report will review the history and transformation of collaborative frameworks for such cooperation, and how they can be further supported, including how they can contribute towards achieving the 2030 Agenda, given its global context. The report will contribute to deliberations at the Second High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation.

77. During the reporting period the Office for South-South Cooperation signed two partnership agreements with institutes of Peking University: the first agreement, with the Center for New Structural Economics, supports the launch of a global coalition of *think tank networks for South-South cooperation*; and the second, with the Institute of South-South Cooperation and Development, promotes youth leadership and capacity development through South-South cooperation and supports the establishment of a "South-South Cooperation and United Nations Chairs" lecture series.

78. At the regional level, the Division for Arab States, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States of the Office for South-South Cooperation has continued to

convene regional networking forums as a space for stakeholders to share knowledge on best practices and deepen their understanding of the role of South-South cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The fourth forum, held in Istanbul in June 2018, focused on how the private sector could be engaged to contribute to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda through South-South and triangular cooperation. The Division has, in collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College, trained representatives of technical cooperation agencies and national focal points for South-South cooperation on the trends, models and benefits of South-South cooperation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, the Division has published good practices on South-South cooperation and regional reports on its value for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Division has also taken stock of trends and opportunities for such cooperation in Djibouti, Georgia and Montenegro.

79. The Division for Asia-Pacific of the Office for South-South Cooperation has a designed space on the Office's web portal that facilitates knowledge exchanges and provides information on national and United Nations agency focal points for South-South cooperation, including events relevant to South-South cooperation in the region. Further to its participation in the Regional Coordination Mechanism on collaboration between the United Nations and ASEAN, the Division is mapping major South-South initiatives in the region. It has worked with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to hold consultative meetings in the Asia-Pacific region on the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation and assisted the Commission in launching a regional forum for directors of development cooperation on South-South cooperation matters.

80. The Office for South-South Cooperation has continued to manage trust funds for South-South cooperation and to support demand-driven South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives. In 2017, India made an unprecedented contribution to the trust funds managed by the Office with the launch of the $100 million India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund. Over the past year, 22 projects have been approved in 25 partner countries to support South-owned, demand-driven sustainable development. India has offered an additional $50 million for projects in member States of the Commonwealth. The Office also has provided catalytic resources to support collaborative projects on climate change and other priority areas in developing countries.

81. The United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation, which has received $8.7 million in contributions, has implemented those resources through eight global projects. In addition, the Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, a dedicated trust fund within UNDP created by the Governments of Brazil, India and South Africa, has received $2 million in contributions and has implemented approximately $3.5 million through 10 projects; and the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund, with $0.34 million in contributions, has implemented $0.42 million through 26 projects.[11]

82. A review conducted by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit in 2018 found that most of the United Nations entities it had surveyed appreciated the leadership and coordination role performed by the Office for South-South Cooperation in anchoring South-South and triangular cooperation across the United Nations development system.[12]

83. The Office for South-South Cooperation has strengthened the programme management, monitoring and evaluation of its new strategic plan in line with the

[11] For more information on fund management, see https://www.unsouthsouth.org/our-work/south-south-trust-fund-management/.

[12] JIU/REP/2018/2, "Progress report on the recommendations contained in the Review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2011/3))".

recommendations of the final evaluation of its strategic framework for 2014–2017. It has implemented all 16 recommendations on its activities submitted by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations in its 2016 audit, including the clarification of management relationships, reporting lines and functions to improve transparency, accountability and efficiency.[13] In this context, the Office has also implemented the recommendations of the UNDP management consulting team to ensure that its staffing profile matches its core mandates and to enhance its impact across the United Nations system. To improve its operational effectiveness, the Office has also adopted a clearer distribution of responsibilities among staff.

84. In addition, the Office for South-South Cooperation has set up a Programme Support Unit headed by a Deputy Director to ensure that all operations are consistent with UNDP policies and procedures and has taken steps to achieve better gender parity. In line with UNDP standards and procedures, the Unit has fostered the transparency and accountability of the Office through the submission to UNDP of an integrated workplan for the Office as part of the annual resources plan of the organization.

85. In further efforts to improve transparency and accountability, and as recommended by the 2016 audit, the Office for South-South Cooperation has designed a comprehensive office-wide evaluation plan to track and report on progress towards the goals set out in its strategic framework. In this regard, the Office is following the guidelines set out in UNDP policies and procedures. In response to calls from Member States for coherent United Nations support to their development initiatives, the activities under the new strategic framework are to be aligned with the strategic frameworks and plans of relevant organizations of the United Nations development system.

86. To avoid working in silos, the Office for South-South Cooperation also has continued to leverage the vast network of UNDP country offices, United Nations organizations and country teams as well as the network of national and United Nations focal points for South-South cooperation. These partners enable the Office to catalyse the integration of South-South approaches to development into various development policies and programming tools, including the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks at the country level. Specifically, the Office has signed innovative partnership agreements with the Governments of Honduras and Panama and with the United Nations country teams in those countries. These agreements serve to coordinate the work of the Office and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes working with Government entities to promote and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through expanded South-South and triangular cooperation.

87. The Office for South-South Cooperation will continue to prepare reports of the Administrator of UNDP containing assessments of its work for review at the biennial sessions of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. The General Assembly will monitor and assess United Nations system-wide support to South-South and triangular cooperation based on the information submitted by the Office as contained in the annual reports of the Secretary-General. In addition, the Office will summarize its work in the reports of the UNDP Administrator submitted to the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of the UNDP strategic plan, and will report to the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Office for Project Services on its compliance with Executive Board decision 2018/5.

[13] See United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office of Audit and Investigations, Report No. 1754, February 2017, "Audit of United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation".

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

88. South-South cooperation has galvanized the efforts of various actors in the global South to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I welcome the expanded engagement of United Nations organizations to leverage the collaborative spirit of South-South cooperation to facilitate exchanges of expertise and technology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

89. I further welcome the partnerships, trust funds and centres of excellence that countries of the South establish to bolster South-South collaboration; these are viable avenues for achieving sustainable development in the spirit of South-South solidarity.

90. The professionals who organize themselves into think tanks, communities of practice, networks and expert groups to foster South-South experiential learning and other exchanges present real opportunities to improve human and institutional capacity development in the global South. I encourage United Nations organizations to help to direct the pooled expertise of these professionals towards the continued implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets through collaborative mechanisms at the national and subnational levels.

91. The report highlights the evolving extension of South-South cooperation beyond exchanges among and within countries to embrace its multi-stakeholder nature. This trend makes South-South cooperation more inclusive, and I call upon United Nations organizations to conduct feasibility studies and/or to provide knowledge products that are essential to the equitable implementation and success of large-scale South-South programmes.

92. I welcome the expansion in South-South policy dialogues on ways to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations development system should help to optimize the development impact of South-South and triangular cooperation through support for the systematic implementation of the agreements reached during such policy dialogues while reporting the results to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation.

93. I request the Office for South-South Cooperation to continue its management of the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation, a mechanism that is accessible to other United Nations partner entities, to mobilize resources to advance South-South initiatives.

94. To further improve the coherence and coordination of United Nations support to South-South cooperation, I call upon the Office for South-South Cooperation to coordinate, in consultation with the United Nations agencies, the preparation of a United Nations system-wide South-South cooperation strategy.[14] I also request the Office to organize regular inter-agency meetings to share knowledge and experiences and to disseminate information on the South-South activities of each organization based on their relevant core competences and mandates.

95. I reiterate my recommendation that the United Nations system provide substantive inputs to inform discussions among the Member States in preparation for the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, to be held in 2019, through the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the secretariat of the preparatory process.

[14] A/72/297, para. 94.